

CLASSROOM FACTORS ENSURING SUCCESS FOR ELLS

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY / SUMMER 2010 / VOLUME 1

WORKING WITH ESL STUDENTS

Working with second language learners is always a challenge--especially when classrooms are multilingual with many different languages and proficiency levels represented.

LANGUAGES REPRESENTED

The following languages are only several of 80 represented in this school district (in order of number):

- Spanish
- Vietnamese
- Korean
- Arabic
- German
- French
- Hindi
- Kurdish
- Kru, Ibo, Yoruba



Factors to Consider

It is important to consider various factors when working with second language learners in the classroom. Although many relate to literacy and language proficiency, some factors relate to the academic environment, others relate to culture.

Important factors:

- Social and cultural individualities and customs
- Gender roles and family roles
- Cultural and societal expectations.



GENDER DIFFERENCES: Always remember to gather as much information regarding the differing gender roles of your students' home country and culture. Also consider clothing, the role of school, and gender in the family.



SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS: As with gender, it is important to research specific social and cultural "norms" within the cultures represented by your second language learners. Celebrate individualities for language success.



CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS: Also related to gender and social factors, cultural expectations in terms of academics and achievement differs from culture to culture. This plays an important role in language.